

CLAIMS

1. A dimmable lighting system comprising a fluorescent lamp driven by an electronic ballast comprising a self-excited drive circuit, and means for providing a variable DC voltage as an output, said variable DC voltage being the input to said ballast.
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2. A system as claimed in claim 1 wherein said means for providing a variable DC voltage comprises an AC-DC power converter connected between an AC mains and said ballast.
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3. A system as claimed in claim 2 wherein said power converter comprises a step-up/down flyback converter.
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4. A system as claimed in claim 2 wherein said power converter comprises a step-down forward converter.
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5. A system as claimed in claim 2 wherein said power converter is a power factor corrected AC-DC converter.
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6. A system as claimed in claim 1 wherein said means for providing a variable DC voltage comprises an AC-DC converter connected to an AC mains supply, followed by a DC-DC power converter providing said variable DC voltage as an output to said ballast.

7. A system as claimed in claim 6 wherein said AC-DC converter is a power factor corrected converter.

5 8. A system as claimed in claim 6 comprising multiple lamps in parallel.

9. A system as claimed in claim 1 wherein said means for providing a variable DC voltage is provided separately from said ballast and said lamp, and wherein said means for providing a variable DC voltage is provided with connection means enabling said means for providing a variable DC voltage to be connected between an AC mains supply and said lamp.

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10. A system as claimed in claim 1 wherein said means for providing a variable DC voltage is formed integrally with said ballast.

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11. Apparatus for enabling dimming control of a nominally non-dimmable lamp comprising, means for providing a variable DC voltage, said means for providing a variable DC voltage having connection means that enables said means for providing a variable DC voltage to be located between a lamp fitting and a said lamp.

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12. Apparatus as claimed in claim 11 wherein said means for providing a variable DC voltage comprises an AC-DC power converter.

13. Apparatus as claimed in claim 12 wherein said power converter comprises a step-up/down flyback converter.

5 14. Apparatus as claimed in claim 12 wherein said power converter comprises a step-down forward converter.

15. Apparatus as claimed in claim 12 wherein said power converter is a power factor corrected AC-DC converter.

10 16. Apparatus as claimed in claim 11 wherein said means for providing a variable DC voltage comprises an AC-DC converter followed by a DC-DC power converter providing said variable DC voltage as an output to said ballast.

15 17. Apparatus as claimed in claim 16 wherein said AC-DC converter is a power factor corrected converter.

18. A method for providing dimming control of a nominally non-dimmable lamp driven by an electronic ballast comprising a self-excited drive circuit, comprising providing a variable DC voltage as an input to said ballast.

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19. A method as claimed in claim 18 wherein said variable DC voltage is obtained by providing an AC-DC power converter between an AC mains supply and said ballast.
- 5 20. A method as claimed in claim 18 wherein said power converter comprises a step-up/down flyback converter.
21. A method as claimed in claim 18 wherein said power converter comprises a step-down forward converter.
- 10 22. A method as claimed in claim 18 wherein said power converter is a power factor corrected AC-DC converter.
23. A method as claimed in claim 18 wherein said variable DC voltage is provided by an AC-DC converter connected to an AC mains supply, followed by a DC-DC power converter providing said variable DC voltage as an output to said ballast.
- 15 24. A method as claimed in claim 23 wherein said AC-DC converter is a power factor corrected converter.
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25. A method as claimed in claim 18 wherein said variable DC voltage is provided by a separate module that is located between an AC mains supply and said ballast.

5 26. A method as claimed in claim 18 wherein said variable DC voltage is provided by a means formed integrally with said ballast.

10 27. A method of converting a nominally non-dimmable lamp into a dimmable lamp comprising connecting to an AC mains supply a module capable of providing a variable DC voltage, and connecting said lamp to said module whereby said variable DC voltage is provided as the input to said lamp.